

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
Administration for Children and Families  
Administration on Children, Youth and Families  
Children's BCFS

**Final Report**  
**Maine Child and Family Services Review**

**October 27, 2003**

**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**  
**Administration for Children and Families**  
**Administration on Children, Youth and Families**  
**Children's Bureau**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Final Report: Maine Child and Family Services Review**

This document presents the findings of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) for the State of Maine. The CFSR was conducted the week of July 21, 2003. The findings were derived from the following documents and data collection procedures:

- The Statewide Assessment, prepared by the State child welfare agency – the Maine Department of Human Services, Bureau of Child and Family Services (BCFS);
- The State Data Profile, prepared by the Children's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which provides State child welfare data for the years 1999 through 2001;
- Reviews of 50 cases at three sites (Lewiston, Portland, and Biddeford) throughout the State; and
- Interviews or focus groups (conducted at all three sites and at the State-level) with stakeholders including, but not limited to children, parents, foster parents, all levels of child welfare agency personnel, collaborating agency personnel, service providers, court personnel, and attorneys.

The CFSR assesses State performance with regard to seven outcomes in the areas of safety, permanency, and well-being, and seven systemic factors. A key finding of the Maine CFSR is that the State is in substantial conformity with one of the seven outcomes. Maine achieved substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 2 (Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs) based on the CFSR finding that BCFS is effective in addressing the educational needs of children in foster care and in-home services cases.

Key concerns identified with respect to the State's performance on the outcomes occurred for Safety Outcome 1 (Children are first and foremost protected from abuse and neglect), Permanency Outcome 1 (Children have permanency and stability in their living situations), and Well Being Outcome 1 (Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs). With respect to Safety Outcome 1, data from the State data profile indicate that the State meets the national standards for the percentage of children who experienced a recurrence of maltreatment within 6 months and the percentage of children who were maltreated by foster parents or facility staff. In addition, the case reviews conducted during the CFSR found little evidence of maltreatment recurrence as it is measured on the case review instrument. However, the CFSR findings indicate that BCFS is not effective in responding to maltreatment reports in a timely manner, and that BCFS policy regarding response timeframes is not adequate to ensure children's protection. Although the CFSR found considerable improvements in recent years in the agency's response to allegations of abuse by foster parents or facility staff, it was noted that further improvement is necessary to ensure children's safety.

The State's performance on Permanency Outcome 1 was of particular concern in that only 22.6 percent of the cases were rated as having substantially achieved this item. In addition, the State did not meet the national standard for the percentage of children who (1) were reunified with their families within 12 months of entry into foster care; (2) achieved a finalized adoption within 24 months of entry into foster care; and (3) experienced no more than 2 placements during their first 12 months in foster care. A general finding of the case reviews and the stakeholder interviews is that BCFS is not consistently effective in: (1) ensuring children's placement stability while in foster care; (2) establishing appropriate permanency goals in a timely manner, or (3) making diligent efforts to achieve

children's permanency goals in a timely manner. However, the State has a low percentage of children who re-enter foster care within 12 months of a previous foster care episode, as evidenced by both case reviews and the State Data Profile.

Several court-related barriers to achieving finalized adoptions in a timely manner were identified during the onsite CFSR. Stakeholders interviewed about this issue indicated that termination of parental rights petitions are being filed in a timely manner, but that there are extensive delays in scheduling a TPR hearing (which often takes 3 to 4 months) and in the agency receiving the signed court order from the District Court. Stakeholders also indicated that both the courts and BCFS tend to allow parents to have more time to achieve work toward reunification even when the prognosis for reunification is low.

Finally, only 42 percent of the cases were rated as having substantially achieved Well-Being Outcome 1, with all indicators determined to be areas in need of improvement. Of particular concern was the lack of adequate face-to-face contact between BCFS workers and the children and parents in their caseloads. Only 30 percent of the 50 applicable cases were rated as a Strength for caseworker contacts with children, and only 40 percent of the 40 applicable cases were rated as a Strength for caseworker contacts with parents.

With regard to the seven systemic factors, the State was determined to be in substantial conformity with the factors of Statewide Information System; Training; Agency Responsiveness to the Community; and Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention. The State did not achieve substantial conformity with the systemic factors of Case Review System, Quality Assurance System, or Service Array.

The findings with regard to the State's performance on the safety and permanency outcomes are presented in table 1 at the end of the Executive Summary. Findings regarding well-being outcomes are presented in table 2. Table 3 presents the State's performance relative to the national standards, and table 4 provides information pertaining to the State's substantial conformity with the seven systemic factors assessed through the CFSR.

## **I. KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO OUTCOMES**

### **Safety Outcome 1: Children are first and foremost protected from abuse and neglect**

Safety Outcome 1 incorporates two indicators. One pertains to the timeliness of initiating a response to a child maltreatment report (item 1), and the other relates to the recurrence of substantiated or indicated maltreatment for the same children (item 2).

Maine did not achieve substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 1. This determination was based on the finding that the outcome was substantially achieved in 74.0 percent of the cases reviewed, which is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of substantial conformity. Performance with regard to this outcome varied across the localities included in the onsite CFSR. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 83 percent of Lewiston cases and 77 percent of Portland cases, compared to only 57 percent of Biddeford cases. However, the State Data Profile data for 2001 indicate that Maine met the national standards for (1) the

percentage of children experiencing more than one substantiated or indicated child maltreatment report within a 6-month period, and (2) the percentage of children maltreated while in foster care.

A key finding of the CFSR case reviews was that BCFS does not consistently respond to maltreatment reports in accordance with State-established timeframes. In 58 percent of the applicable cases reviewed, BCFS did not establish face-to-face contact with the child victim in a timely manner. An additional finding of the CFSR was that the State's "two-phase" process of assigning maltreatment allegations for investigation results in long periods of time before the child who is the subject of the report is actually seen by a worker, even when the timeframes are consistent with State requirements. The first "phase" begins with the time the allegation is received and ends when the allegation is assigned to a District Office for investigation. The second "phase" begins when a supervisor at the District Office assigns the report to a social worker, and ends when he or she establishes face-to-face contact with the child. Stakeholders noted that sometimes it can take up to 21 days before this process is completed, even for reports that are classified as "high risk."

The CFSR case reviews did not find frequent repeat maltreatment, as it is measured for the case review instrument (item 2). In addition the State's incidence of maltreatment recurrence (5.7%) for 2001, as reported in the State Data Profile, meets the national standard of 6.1 percent or less. However, stakeholders reported that maltreatment allegations on open cases often are handled by the ongoing caseworker rather than reported to intake for investigation. Consequently all actual instances of maltreatment recurrence may not be captured in the State's data.

### **Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes when possible and appropriate**

Performance relevant to Safety Outcome 2 is assessed through two indicators. One indicator (item 3) addresses the issue of the BCFS' efforts to prevent children's removal from their homes by providing services to the families that ensure children's safety while they remain in their homes. The other indicator (item 4) pertains to the agency's effectiveness in reducing the risk of harm to children.

A key finding of the CFSR case reviews was that BCFS is not consistent in providing appropriate services to families to protect children in the home and prevent their removal, and is not consistently effective in reducing the risk of harm to children. The key concern identified pertained to inadequate assessments resulting in the delivery of services that are not appropriate to ensure the child's safety and reduce risk of harm. In particular, case reviewers reported a lack of appropriate assessments in cases in which sexual abuse was a primary or secondary reason for agency contact with the family.

### **Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.**

There are six indicators incorporated into the assessment of permanency outcome 1, although not all of them are relevant for all children. The indicators pertain to the agency's effectiveness in preventing foster care re-entry (item 5), ensuring placement stability for children in foster care (item 6), and establishing appropriate permanency goals for children in foster care in a timely manner (item 7). Depending on the child's permanency goal, the remaining indicators focus on the agency's efforts to achieve permanency goals (such as reunification, guardianship, adoption, and permanent placement with relatives) in a timely manner (items 8 and 9), or whether

the agency is effective in ensuring that children who have “other planned living arrangement” as a case goal are in stable placements and adequately prepared for eventual independent living (item 10).

Maine did not achieve substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1. This was based on the following findings:

- The outcome was substantially achieved in 22.6 percent of the cases, which is less than the 90 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity.
- Fiscal year (FY) 2001 data reported in the State Data Profile indicate that the State did not meet the national standards for the percentage of children who (1) achieved reunification within 12 months of entry into foster care, (2) achieved a finalized adoption within 24 months of entry into foster care, or (2) experienced no more than 2 placement settings after having been in foster care for 12 months or less.

However, FY 2001 data provided in the State Data Profile indicate that the State met the national standard for the percentage of children entering foster care who were re-entering within 12 months of discharge from a prior foster care episode.

Although all localities included in the onsite CFSR performed poorly on this outcome, cases in Portland were more likely to have substantially achieved this outcome (31%) than case in Biddeford (25%) or in Lewiston (0 cases).

The case review results and the data provided in the State Data Profile suggest that BCFS is not consistently effective with regard to (1) ensuring children’s placement stability while in foster care, (2) establishing appropriate permanency goals in a timely manner, or (3) making diligent efforts to achieve children’s permanency goals in a timely manner. Both Statewide data and case review findings, however, indicate that BCFS is effective in preventing re-entry into foster care.

A key concern identified through the CFSR was that children are in foster care for too long. This was attributed to various factors including, but not limited to, the following:

- Caseworkers tend to equate stability with permanency, so that if children are in stable foster care placements, caseworkers do not attend to permanency issues.
- The goal of reunification is maintained for long periods of time (by both the courts and the agency), even when the prognosis for reunification is low.
- Many caseworkers maintain the belief that both children and parents must be “completely fixed” before permanency (either through adoption or reunification) can be achieved.

## **Permanency Outcome 2. The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.**

Permanency Outcome 2 incorporates six indicators that assess agency performance with regard to (1) placing children in foster care in close proximity to their parents and close relatives (item 11); (2) placing siblings together (item 12); (3) ensuring frequent visitation between children and their parents and siblings in foster care (item 13); (4) preserving connections of children in foster care with extended family, community, cultural heritage, religion, and schools (item 14); (5) seeking relatives as potential placement resources (item 15); and (6) promoting the relationship between children and their parents while the children are in foster care (item 16).

Performance with respect to achieving Permanency Outcome 2 varied considerably across localities included in the onsite CFSR. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 75 percent of Portland cases and 62.5 percent of Biddeford cases, compared to only 29 percent of Lewiston cases.

CFSR findings indicate that the Bureau makes concerted efforts to place siblings together in foster care and to promote the parent-child relationship while children are in foster care. However, case reviewers determined that the agency is not consistent in its efforts to (1) ensure that children are placed in close proximity to their parents or communities of origin, or (2) preserve connections between children and their extended families. In addition, case reviewers found that in a majority of cases, the workers did not make concerted efforts to seek and assess relatives as placement resources, although this is required in BCFS policy.

A key concern identified with regard to this outcome pertained to visitation between children in foster care and their siblings who are also in foster care. Case reviewers determined that although BCFS makes concerted efforts to place siblings together, when they are separated, visitation often is not sufficient to meet the children's needs and ensure that their connections are maintained.

#### **Well-Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.**

Well-Being Outcome 1 incorporates four indicators. One pertains to agency efforts to ensure that the service needs of children, parents, and foster parents are assessed, and that the necessary services are provided to meet identified needs (item 17). A second indicator assesses agency effectiveness with regard to actively involving parents and children (when appropriate) in the case planning process (item 18). The two remaining indicators examine the frequency and quality of caseworker contacts with the children in their caseloads (item 19) and the children's parents (item 20).

Maine did not achieve substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 1. This determination was based on the finding that the outcome was rated as substantially achieved in 42.0 percent of the cases reviewed, which is less than the 90 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity.

The CFSR case reviews revealed that BCFS is not consistently effective with regard to (1) assessing needs and providing services to children, parents, and foster parents (item 17), or (2) involving children and parents in case planning (item 18). The most significant concern identified, however, pertained to the lack of face-to-face contact between caseworkers and the children in their caseloads. In 70 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the frequency and quality of worker contacts with children was not sufficient to ensure their safety or well-being. In all of these cases, contacts with children occurred less frequently than once a month, and in most cases, workers typically made contact with children once every 3 months. In addition, case reviewers determined that in a substantial percentage of cases, when workers did make contact with children, the contact did not focus on issues pertinent to case planning, service delivery, and goal attainment.

## **Well Being Outcome 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.**

There is only one indicator for Well-Being Outcome 2. It pertains to agency effectiveness in addressing children's educational needs (item 21). The determination of substantial conformity with this outcome is based on the CFSR finding that BCFS is effective in assessing children's educational needs and providing appropriate services to meet those needs.

## **Well Being Outcome 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.**

This outcome incorporates two indicators; one assesses agency efforts to meet children's physical health needs (item 22); the other assesses agency efforts to address children's mental health needs (item 23).

Maine did not achieve substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 3. This determination was based on the finding that the outcome was rated as substantially achieved in 72.9 percent of the 48 applicable cases, which is less than the 90 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity.

A key CFSR finding was that BCFS is effective in meeting the children's physical health needs, but is less consistently effective in meeting children's mental health needs. A key concern identified pertained to a lack of accessibility of mental health services, resulting in children having mental health service needs that are not being addressed.

## **II. KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO SYSTEMIC FACTORS**

### **Statewide Information System**

Substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Statewide Information System is determined by whether the State is operating a statewide information system that can identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for children in foster care.

Maine achieved substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Statewide Information System. The Maine Automated Child Welfare Information System (MACWIS) meets the requirements for identifying the status, demographic characteristics, location, and placement goals for children in foster care.

### **Case Review System**

Five indicators are used to assess the State's performance with regard to the systemic factor of Case Review System. The indicators examine the development of case plans and parent involvement in that process (item 25), the consistency of 6-month case reviews (item 26) and 12-month permanency hearings (item 27), the implementation of procedures to seek termination of parental rights (TPR) in accordance with the timeframes established in the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) (item 28), and the notification and inclusion of foster and pre-adoptive parents and relative caregivers in case reviews and hearings (item 29).

Maine is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Case Review System. Both case reviews and stakeholder interview information indicate that caseplans are not routinely developed in collaboration with parents. In addition, the CFSR found that, although there is a process in place for holding permanency hearings as required, the effectiveness of the hearings is insufficient to promote the timely achievement of permanency for children in foster care. Similarly, although procedures are in place to pursue termination of parental rights (TPR) for children in foster care in accordance with the provisions of ASFA, there are many barriers to the effective operation of these procedures resulting in frequent delays in achieving TPR. Finally, information from stakeholder interviews indicates that (1) the State is not consistent with regard to the notification of foster parents, preadoptive parents, and relative caregivers regarding reviews or hearings; and (2) the courts are not consistent in ensuring opportunities for these caretakers to provide input into the reviews or hearings.

Despite these concerns, the CFSR found that the State is effective in ensuring that the status of each child in foster care is reviewed at least once every 6 months, either through an administrative review process or by the courts.

### **Quality Assurance System**

The State's performance with regard to the systemic factor of Quality Assurance System is based on whether the State has developed standards to ensure the safety and health of children in foster care (item 30), and whether the State is operating a statewide quality assurance system that evaluates the quality and effectiveness of services and measures program strengths and areas needing improvement (item 31).

Maine is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Quality Assurance System. The key concern identified during the CFSR pertained to the agency's inconsistency in responding to maltreatment reports in a timely manner, particularly reports of child maltreatment by foster parents or facility staff. The CFSR found that, although BCFS has made improvements in recent years in the timeliness of response to maltreatment reports, there is a need for additional strengthening of this program area. Despite this concern, the CFSR found that BCFS operates an identifiable quality assurance system that is used for agency self-monitoring.

### **Training**

The systemic factor of Training incorporates an assessment of the State's new worker training program (item 32), ongoing training efforts for child welfare agency staff (item 33), and training for foster and adoptive parents (item 34).

Maine achieved substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Training. The CFSR found that BCFS requires and supports ongoing training for staff through the provision of extensive training opportunities in collaboration with the Child Welfare Training Institute, and requires and supports pre-service and ongoing training for foster and adoptive parents and other caretakers through a variety of traditional and innovative methods. However, the CFSR also found that, although the State has established a pre-service training program for all new staff, the training does not adequately prepare new social workers to perform basic aspects of their jobs.



## **Service Array**

The assessment of the systemic factor of Service Array addresses three questions: (1) Does the State have in place an array of services that meet the needs of children and families served by the child welfare agency (item 35)? (2) Are these services accessible to families and children throughout the State (item 36)? And (3) Can services be individualized to meet the unique needs of the children and family served by the child welfare agency (item 37)?

Maine did not achieve substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Service Array. The CFSR found that although a wide array of services are available, there are service gaps in key areas that affect the achievement of permanency and well being for children. In addition, accessibility to services varies by geography and the willingness of providers (physical, dental, and mental health providers) to accept Medicaid payments. Also, long waiting lists for some service impede the timely delivery of services to parents and children.

Despite these concerns, CFSR findings indicate that BCFS provides social workers with the ability to individualize services to families, and that many social workers make concerted efforts to meet the unique needs of children and families within the limits of existing services.

## **Agency Responsiveness to the Community**

The systemic factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community incorporates the extent of the State's consultation with external stakeholders in developing the Child and Family Services Plan (items 38 and 39), and the extent to which the State coordinates child welfare services with services or benefits of other Federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population (item 40).

Maine is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community. CFSR findings indicate that BCFS has been effective in its efforts to engage in consultation with major stakeholders in implementing the goals and objectives of the Child and Family Services Plan. However, the CFSR determined that greater efforts are needed to engage in more comprehensive consultation on the development and revisions of this plan, particularly with all of the Native American Tribes in the State. The CFSR also found that BCFS is effective in coordinating services with other Federal or federally-assisted programs serving the same population.

## **Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention**

The assessment of this systemic factor focuses on the State's standards for foster homes and child care institutions (items 41 and 42), the State's compliance with Federal requirements for criminal background checks for foster and adoptive parents (item 43), the State's efforts to recruit foster and adoptive parents that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of foster children (item 44), and the State's activities with regard to using cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate permanent placements for waiting children (item 45).

Maine is in substantial conformity with this systemic factor. Key CFSR findings were that:

- The State has developed and implemented standards for alternative care providers in accord with recommended national standards.

- The standards are applied to all licensed or approved foster family homes or child care institutions receiving IV-E or IVB funds.
- Criminal background clearances are required for foster and adoptive applicants by policy and routinely accomplished in a timely manner according to stakeholders.
- The State has implemented numerous efforts to recruit foster and adoptive homes, although there is still a need to recruit homes that can meet the needs of the small number of children in foster care who are from Native American and African American backgrounds.

**Table 1. CFSR Ratings for Safety and Permanency Outcomes and Items for Maine**

<b>Outcomes and Indicators</b>	<b>Outcome Ratings</b>			<b>Item Ratings</b>		
	<i><b>In Substantial Conformity?</b></i>	<i><b>Percent Substantially Achieved*</b></i>	<i><b>Met National Standards?</b></i>	<i><b>Rating**</b></i>	<i><b>Percent Strength</b></i>	<i><b>Met National Standards</b></i>
Safety Outcome 1-Children are first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect	No	72.9	both met			
Item 1: Timeliness of investigations				ANI	42	
Item 2: Repeat maltreatment				Strength	94	Yes
Safety Outcome 2 - Children are safely maintained in their homes when possible and appropriate	No	75.5				
Item 3: Services to prevent removal				ANI	70	
Item 4: Risk of harm				ANI	80	
Permanency Outcome 1- Children have permanency and stability in their living situations	No	22.6	1 met, 3 not met			
Item 5: Foster care re-entry				Strength	100	Yes
Item 6: Stability of foster care placements				ANI	65	No
Item 7: Permanency goal for child				ANI	48	
Item 8: Reunification, guardianship and placement with relatives				ANI	44	No
Item 9: Adoption				ANI	14	No
Item 10: Other planned living arrangement				ANI	37.5	
Permanency Outcome 2 - The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved	No	61.3				
Item 11: Proximity of placement				ANI	80	
Item 12: Placement with siblings				Strength	90	
Item 13: Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care				ANI	68	
Item 14: Preserving connections				ANI	63	
Item 15: Relative placement				ANI	45	
Item 16: Relationship of child in care with parents				Strength	85	

\*90 percent of the applicable cases reviewed must be rated as having substantially achieved the outcome for the State to be in substantial conformity with the outcome.

\*\*Items may be rated as a Strength or an Area Needing Improvement (ANI)

**Table 2. CFSR Ratings for Well-Being Outcomes and Items for Maine**

<b>Outcomes and Indicators</b>	<b>Outcome Ratings</b>		<b>Item Ratings</b>			
	<i><b>In Substantial Conformity?</b></i>	<i><b>Percent Substantially Achieved*</b></i>	<i><b>Met National Standards</b></i>	<i><b>Rating**</b></i>	<i><b>Percent Strength</b></i>	<i><b>Met National Standards</b></i>
Well Being Outcome 1 – Families have enhanced capacity to provide for children's needs	No	42.0				
Item 17: Needs/services of child, parents, and foster parents				ANI	66	
Item 18: Child/family involvement in case planning				ANI	57	
Item 19: Worker visits with child				ANI	30	
Item 20: Worker visits with parents				ANI	40	
Well Being Outcome 2 – Children receive services to meet their educational needs	Yes	89.5				
Item 21: Educational needs of child				Strength	89	
Well Being Outcome 3 – Children receive services to meet their physical and mental health needs are met	No	72.9				
Item 22: Physical health of child				Strength	85	
Item 23: Mental health of child				ANI	73	

\*90 percent of the applicable cases reviewed must be rated as having substantially achieved the outcome for the State to be in substantial conformity with the outcome.

\*\*Items may be rated as a Strength or an Area Needing Improvement (ANI)

**Table 3: Maine's performance on the six outcome measures for which national standards have been established (2001 data)**

<b>Outcome Measure</b>	<b>National Standard</b>	<b>Maine Data</b>
Of all children who were victims of a substantiated or indicated maltreatment report in the first 6 months of CY 2001, what percent were victims of another substantiated or indicated report within a 6-month period?	6.1% or less	5.7%
Of all children who were in foster care in the first 9 months of CY 2001, what percent experienced maltreatment from foster parents or facility staff members?	0.57% or less	0.48%
Of all children who entered foster care in FY 2001, what percent were re-entering care within 12 months of a prior foster care episode?	8.6% or less	7.3%
Of all children reunified from foster care in FY 2001, what percent were reunified within 12 months of entry into foster care?	76.2% or more	54.2%
Of all children who were adopted from foster care in FY 2001, what percent were adopted within 24 months of their entry into foster care?	32.0% or more	11.9%
Of all children in foster care during FY 2001 for less than 12 months, what percent experienced no more than 2 placement settings?	86.7% or more	74.1%

**Table 4: CFSR Ratings for the Seven Systemic Factors for Maine**

<b>Systemic Factors</b>	<b>In Substantial Conformity?*</b>	<b>Rating</b>
<b>IV. Statewide Information System</b>	<b>Yes (3)</b>	
Item 24: System can identify the status, demographic characteristics, location and goals of children in foster care		Strength
<b>V. Case Review System</b>	<b>No (2)</b>	
Item 25: Process for developing a case plan and for joint case planning with parents		ANI
Item 26: Process for 6-month case reviews		Strength
Item 27: Process for 12-month permanency hearings		ANI
Item 28: Process for seeking TPR in accordance with ASFA		ANI
Item 29: Process for notifying caregivers of reviews and hearings and for opportunity for them to be heard		ANI
<b>VI. Quality Assurance System</b>	<b>No (2)</b>	
Item 30: Standards to ensure quality services and ensure children's safety and health		ANI
Item 31: Identifiable QA system that evaluates the quality of services and improvements		Strength
<b>VII. Training</b>	<b>Yes (3)</b>	
Item 32: Provision of initial staff training		ANI
Item 33: Provision of ongoing staff training that addresses the necessary skills and knowledge.		Strength
Item 34: Provision of training for caregivers and adoptive parents that addresses the necessary skills and knowledge		Strength
<b>VIII. Service Array</b>	<b>No (2)</b>	
Item 35: Availability of array of critical services		ANI
Item 36: Accessibility of services across all jurisdictions		ANI
Item 37: Ability to individualize services to meet unique needs		Strength
<b>IX. Agency Responsiveness to the Community</b>	<b>Yes (3)</b>	
Item 38: Engages in ongoing consultation with critical stakeholders in developing the CFSP		Strength
Item 39: Develops annual progress reports in consultation with stakeholders		ANI
Item 40: Coordinates services with other Federal programs		Strength
<b>X. Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment and Retention</b>	<b>Yes (4)</b>	
Item 41: Standards for foster family and child care institutions		Strength
Item 42: Standards are applied equally to all foster family and child care institutions		Strength
Item 43: Conducts necessary criminal background checks		Strength
Item 44: Diligent recruitment of foster and adoptive families that reflect children's racial and ethnic diversity		Strength
Item 45: Uses cross-jurisdictional resources to find placements		Strength

\*Systemic factors are rated on a scale from 1 to 4. A rating of 1 or 2 indicates "Not in Substantial Conformity." A rating of 3 or 4 indicates Substantial Conformity.

\*\* Individual items may be rated either as a Strength or as an Area Needing Improvement (ANI)

## Introduction

This document presents the findings of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) for the State of Maine. The CFSR was conducted the week of July 21, 2003. The findings were derived from the following documents and data collection procedures:

- The Statewide Assessment, prepared by the State child welfare agency – the Maine Department of Human Services, Bureau of Child and Family Services (BCFS);
- The State Data Profile, prepared by the Children’s Bureau of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which provides State child welfare data for the years 1999 through 2001;
- Reviews of 50 cases at three sites (Lewiston, Portland, and Biddeford) throughout the State; and
- Interviews or focus groups (conducted at all three sites and at the State-level) with stakeholders including, but not limited to children, parents, foster parents, all levels of child welfare agency personnel, collaborating agency personnel, service providers, court personnel, and attorneys.

The key characteristics of the 50 cases reviewed are the following:

- Twenty-four cases were reviewed in Portland, 12 in Lewiston, and 14 in Biddeford.
- All 50 cases had been open cases at some time during the period under review.
- Thirty-one cases were “foster care cases” (cases in which children were in the care and custody of the State child welfare agency and in an out-of-home placement at some time during the period under review), and 19 were “in-home services cases” (cases in which families received services from the child welfare agency while children remained with their families and no child in the family was in out-of-home care during the period under review).
- Of the 31 foster care cases, 21 children (68%) were younger than age 10 at the start of the period under review; 7 children (22%) were at least 10 years old, but not yet 13 years old; and 3 children (10%) were 13 years of age and older at the start of the period under review.
- All children in the family were White in 47 cases, Native American in 1 case, and of two or more races in 2 cases.
- Of the 50 cases reviewed, the **primary** reason for the opening of a child welfare agency case was the following:
  - Neglect (not including medical neglect) – 18 cases (36%)
  - Sexual abuse – 7 cases (14%)
  - Physical abuse – 5 cases (10%)
  - Emotional maltreatment – 5 cases (10%)
  - Substance abuse of parents – 4 cases (8%)
  - Child’s behavior – 3 cases (6%)
  - Domestic violence in child’s home – 2 cases (4%)
  - Medical neglect – 2 cases (4%)

- Mental/physical health of parent – 1 case (2%)
- Abandonment – 1 case (2%)
- Mental/physical health of child – 1 case (2%)
- Parent incarcerated – 1 case (2%)
- Of the 50 cases reviewed, the most frequently cited of all reasons for children coming to the attention of the child welfare agency were the following:
  - Neglect (not including medical neglect) – 40 cases (80% of all cases)
  - Emotional maltreatment – 24 cases (48% of all cases)
  - Substance abuse by parents – 21 cases (42% of all cases)
  - Physical abuse – 21 cases (42 % of all cases)
  - Sexual abuse – 17 cases (34% of all cases)
- In 22 (71%) of the 31 foster care cases, the children entered foster care prior to the period under review and remained in care during the entire period under review.

The first section of the report presents CFSR findings relevant to the State's performance in achieving seven outcomes for children in the areas of safety, permanency, and well-being. For each outcome, there is a table presenting key findings, a discussion of the State's status with regard to the outcome, and a presentation and discussion of each item (indicator) assessed. For the most part, findings are presented for all three sites taken together, with differences among sites described when they are particularly noteworthy. The second section of the report provides an assessment and discussion of the findings regarding seven systemic factors relevant to the child welfare agency's ability to achieve positive outcomes for children.